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**From:** Greene, Nikia [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=32A08A414A4F40199B557C0819EB7D0B-GREENE, NIKIA]  
**Sent:** 7/24/2019 1:42:34 PM  
**To:** Elsen, Henry [Elsen.Henry@epa.gov]; Wardell, Christopher [Wardell.Christopher@epa.gov]; Vranka, Joe [vranka.joe@epa.gov]; Smidinger, Betsy [Smidinger.Betsy@epa.gov]; Jim Freeman [james.freeman2@usdoj.gov]  
**Subject:** FW: Article on Parrot tailings

FYI

Nikia Greene  
Remedial Project Manager  
U.S. EPA, Region 8  
(406)-457-5019  
[green.nikia@epa.gov](mailto:green.nikia@epa.gov)

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**From:** Bryson, Josh <josh.bryson@bp.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 24, 2019 7:40 AM  
**To:** Greene, Nikia <Greene.Nikia@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Article on Parrot tailings

### State to spend restoration money to finish Parrot tailings removal

- [SUSAN DUNLAP susan.dunlap@mtstandard.com](mailto:susan.dunlap@mtstandard.com)

[https://mtstandard.com/news/local/state-to-spend-restoration-money-to-finish-parrot-tailings-removal/article\\_e2200b54-9511-5816-a6a9-6f211dcfb559.html#utm\\_source=mtstandard.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Femail-updates%2Fbreaking&utm\\_medium=PostUp&utm\\_content=6d21b8cec9f4bdb6899a71d2bd3b26633b1626ad](https://mtstandard.com/news/local/state-to-spend-restoration-money-to-finish-parrot-tailings-removal/article_e2200b54-9511-5816-a6a9-6f211dcfb559.html#utm_source=mtstandard.com&utm_campaign=%2Femail-updates%2Fbreaking&utm_medium=PostUp&utm_content=6d21b8cec9f4bdb6899a71d2bd3b26633b1626ad)

The rest of the money to finish the cleanup on the Parrot tailings behind the Butte Civic Center may be coming out of various restoration pots, according to an email from the Natural Resource Damage Program.

The agency sent out an email late Tuesday announcing that on behalf of Gov. Steve Bullock, the NRD is proposing to transfer \$18.5 million from three different restoration funds the NRD oversees. The agency is seeking public comment on taking \$8 million from the Upper Clark Fork River Basin Restoration Plan Reserves; \$5.8 million from the Butte Area One Restoration fund; and \$4.7 million from the Upper Clark Fork River Basin Restoration Fund/Butte Groundwater Restoration. (See information box.)

The email says the money from these three pots will “fund the remainder of the ... Parrot Tailings Waste Removal Project.”

Calls to Harley Harris, NRD supervising attorney, were not returned. Doug Martin, NRD restoration program chief, said he could not answer questions from The Montana Standard about the proposal. He said questions needed to be put into writing and the Standard would get responses later.

But Marissa Perry, Bullock’s press secretary, said by email that the state does believe this proposed \$18.5 million will be sufficient to pay for what’s left of the project — which includes relocating the county shops to a spot off Beef Trail Road and removing the contamination that lies underneath the current county shops location directly behind the Civic Center.

Harris told the Standard in February that the current cost estimate for the Parrot tailings removal had risen to \$37.2 million from the original \$31 million the agency projected in 2016.

The state started the removal in 2018 with much fanfare but with questions still hovering over where all the money would come from.

This is the first time that question has been answered concretely.

Perry said that the state and the county believe the amendments the two entities are asking for now will be reimbursed by the “Butte trust.”

“If such a settlement is finalized through a consent decree, such proceeds would be made available upon successful completion of the state-led Blacktail Creek and confluence remediation and restoration work,” Perry wrote.

Mick Ringsak, a GOP activist and a volunteer board member for the Upper Clark Fork Advisory Council, said late Tuesday that he’s “not happy” with additional money coming from restoration bank accounts for what many in Butte, and many at the state level, have long viewed a “remedy” issue. But “we’re in very difficult and unusual conditions and the important thing is to get it done,” Ringsak said.

Ringsak said he doesn't worry that Atlantic Richfield will not provide enough money for the Butte trust to cover all of the needs — to both remediate 16 miles of Blacktail Creek and repay the NRD pots Bullock is now proposing the state will pull from to finish the job. A letter from the consent decree negotiators last spring to Restore Our Creek Coalition also said the "Butte trust" would provide some, though not all, of the money for the creek the local group envisions.

"Atlantic Richfield will do the right thing," Ringsak said.

Ron Davis, a member of Silver Bow Creek Headwaters Coalition and owner of Butte Broadcasting, said he thinks this twists the arm of the Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners into being forced to accept the consent decree. But, he says, that's nothing new.

"I think everything they've done this far for the consent decree was done to shanghai the Council of Commissioners. They're put in a no-win situation," Davis said.

If the Environmental Protection Agency makes good on its promise to have a signed consent decree by Aug. 12, the council will have to make a vote whether to support the consent decree or not sometime in the next two to three weeks.

The consent decree will lock in the rest of Atlantic Richfield's responsibilities on the Butte Hill cleanup.

"The council's being told to 'sign it or else,'" Davis said.

### ***How to comment***

The proposal to pull money from three different restoration pots to complete the Parrot tailings removal will be officially brought to the public at 1 p.m. Monday, August 5 at the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, 17 W. Quartz St.

Written comments are due by 5 p.m. August 22 and can be emailed to [NRDP@mt.gov](mailto:NRDP@mt.gov) with "2019 Restoration Plan Amendment" in the subject line. Comments can also be mailed to the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program, 1720 9th Ave., P.O. Box 201425, Helena, MT 59620-1425.

NRD can also be reached at 406-444-0205.

Betsey Weltner  
Weltner Communications  
404-304-3304